

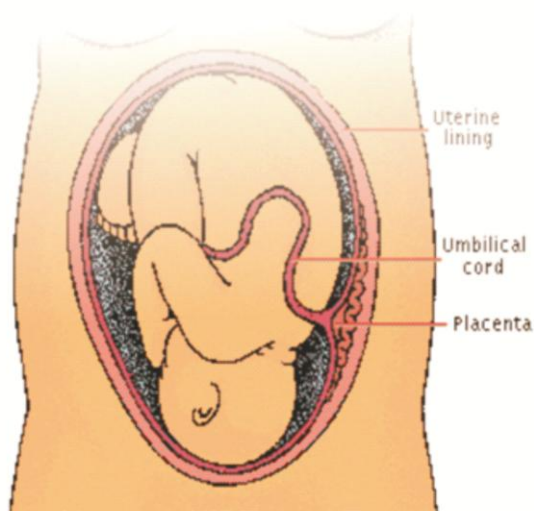
**WRITERS AND ARTISTS AGAINST AIDS AND TOBACCO SMOKING
AND
SOCIETY OF YOUNG NIGERIAN WRITERS**

HIV

A SCOURGE OF THE WORLD

A COLLECTION OF SHORT STORY AND POEMS

ON HIV/AIDS



Compiled And Edited By:

Wole Adedoyin

EDITOR'S NOTE

HIV/AIDS is now decreasing across the globe. This is the result of global sensitization through the help and support received from different international organizations and agencies on the virus.

We strongly believe that poetry is another useful tool for waging war against the deadly disease as demonstrated through this book.

LAST TIME

In the darkened shadows of the night, the splatter of rain drummed on the roof and whispered ode of coldness into her pale skin as she laid on the bed and watched the cloud cry for her accompanied by the roar of thunder cum flicker of lightning .Tears trickled down her face.

Darkness hung heavy in the room and made it difficult for her to locate Mama. Mama was somewhere in the room half asleep with all alertness in case she cried out in agony. She was dying within and in deep pain she wished she could turn back the hands of time but her mortal power was limited to do such.

At age seventeen,she dropped out of high school and adamantly refused to return even after Mama's persuasion. Papa passed away many years ago after struggling to survive with lung cancer due to excessive intake of tobacco. Since then Mama built hope on her as her only child never to put her to shame but she eventually did. Unknown to Mama, after Martha dropped out of school,she indulged in prostitution.

On the 19th of May 1989,the symptoms of HIV struck

as a result of unprotected sex but she never knew it was HIV. She thought it was mere illness. Periodically, she felt slight fever, headaches, fatigue, and muscle aches, but she didn't consult the doctor. She took drugs not prescribed by the doctor to heal her of the illness.

For six good years, HIV inhabited in her body but she had no knowledge until it resulted to AIDS. Only God knew how many people contacted it from her through sexual intercourse, sharing of sharp objects e.t.c

She knew death was knocking at the door of her heart. Suddenly, she felt a hand touch her arm. She knew it was Mama. Martha looked up and saw the tears in her eyes. "Martha ,please don't die and leave Me to suffer alone in this World" Mama said in tears.

Martha looked deeply into her eyes and said weakly, "Mama, don't cry for Me. It breaks my heart to see you weep. I know I'll die. Aids has no cure. I pray thee to forgive Me and tell it to the World that HIV/AIDS kills rapidly. Unprotected sex, blood transfusion, sharing of sharp objects, usage of already used syringe, and Mother-Child transmission are possible ways in which an individual can contact the

virus. Tell them that abstinence is the best means of avoiding the HIV/AIDS infection. Please do if I'm gone, for I know this is my last time to see Mother Earth"

Mama nodded as tears streamed down her face and watched as her eyes closed gradually. Her hand slipped off Mama's. Her breath ceased. Mama screamed.....

Theresa Oguche

VICTIM

The sun arose from the East and stole its way into our one room apartment located at number 19, Ajanlekoko street, off Oniru bus top. Our termite-designed wooden window cursed the sun for revealing its secret. I awoke sharply when the noise of the children playing at the front yard pierced deep into my ear, and yawned lazily. As I got out of bed, my legs thrusted on the heap of dirty clothes I'd worn during the week. I pushed them aside and walked over to the window to feed my eyes with the beauty of nature but suddenly dark memories flooded my mind. I tried to wave it off and focus my attention on the children playing at the front yard but it persisted and embraced my vision in its cloak. At that spot, various images appeared on my mind, and the scenario at the hospital recaped.

"Don't tell Me that Doctor!" Father raged. "Are you sure you tested my Son well? Nobody in my family has HIV/AIDS. Besides, my Son don't flirt with Women. Maybe there is a mix up somewhere. "

The Doctor adjusted his spectacle, and made to speak

when my elder brother Eugene grabbed his arm.
"Chai doctor! Tell us say na lie" he spoke in pidgin, but the doctor confirmed I had HIV. He calmed us down and explained to us the possible ways in which an individual could contact it, which included unprotected sex, Mother-child transmission, sharing of sharp objects, blood transfusion e.t.c. He reassured Me saying that contacting the virus wasn't the head of line. He said as a Victim,I could be placed under medication to help Me survive. As he spoke, my mind flashed back to our meeting at freedom hotel.....

She handed Me the needle and I pierced a finger of mine like she did with hers and watched as my blood dripped into the drink. After that, I stirred the drink together, took a gulp and handed it to her. She did likewise and smiled. We made a blood oath not to betray each other, even as She was about leaving the town for the village.

"Ekaete, this blood oath is everlasting. Any one of us, who breaks the bond, will face the consequence "I said and she nodded. We hugged.

Two days after the doctor diagnosed Me of having HIV,I called Ekaete and explained everything to her saying, "Johnny,I'm sorry I hid the truth from you for so long. I also have HIV. I contacted mine through Mother-child transmission. My Mother died of AIDS a year after I was born. Please forgive Me". I fainted.....

Still at the window, the doctor's voice echoed in my mind. "Contracting HIV doesn't mean the end of life. There's still hope of living. Don't allow the memories of been infected haunt you,for when there is life,there is hope".

Theresa Oguche

THE CONQUEST

Smokey walked into his dorm with a tremendous grin on his face, he shoved the books he was holding on his bed and placed his hands on the edge of the bed bending over and started shaking his butt in the manner they called twerking.

'Oh boy, I no know say you be fag o.' Agidi his friend and roommate said in faked disgust. 'Fag ke, true you be like your name Agidi, you mumu die.' Smokey said standing up. 'Na wetin con cause you dey do Hannah Montana abi Cyrus something for me na, e dey pain my eyes, if na babe now ehen.'

'Na wetin number 91 do before we went down be that, Oh guy I be wan die, the babe dey bang!!!', 'Smokey you still dey count nonsense, guy forget that shit and stop.'

'Bad man cant stop my shine, 9 more to go before I reach 100, I must knock one zero zero before I write my last paper.'

'Ok oh who you bang today ?

'Akpu.'

'Ehhh.'

'Na her name be that.'

Smokey was a 400 level geography student, he was wild and loved to live life to the fullest, his grades were manageable, but his looks and physique were commendable, he had a great history with wooing ladies unscrupulously.

While joking a friend suggested he proved his manhood by bedding 100 girls before graduating, Smokey took it to heart and thus his conquest began.

His victory was at hand, the number was growing, that made him boast even harder. '99 no be joke and GEO419 is still 72 hours away, am a boss.' He said beating his chest. 'C'mon stop bragging, no be ashewo u dey carry, even if na 200 u go nab am stop feeling big joor.' Agidi said.

'Ehen which kind, some are good girls and I no pay one naira for the 99, in fact I did some like 10 times before discarding.'

I wonder how you do it, I'm not that lucky yet you get 99 girls and even do some 10 times, how do you do it.' Egusi a friend to the duo who had been present and also very much aware of Smokey's conquest added.

'Egusi you're a slob, see all girls, ashawo or no ashawo are extremely emotional, so just profess love to them, you know lie, use song lyrics and you get laid.' Smokey boasted.

'Is it songs like shoki ahhh shoki or she no wan designer, she no wan Ferrari she say na my lov....'
'Stop jare, wetin u dey sing, talk say u dey look for Johnny now, mtchewwe no wonder you're still a virgin in 400 level.'

'Wetin I wan do now, I no dey do gym and dumbbell things like you, I no get muscle.'
'Yes na true you talk, leave the job to the expert, one more new girl and I reach to goal.'

'Smokey let number 100 be a challenge, try a Church girl, shebi you say no be ashewo u dey pack and na song u dey sing try deeper life mek we see, show your Powers.'

Agidi said.

'Hehehehe I no dey like them but I will do it for your sake, the day I Will bang you will see.'
'Oya now 72 hours left, start o, your clock starts now.'

Smokey started scanning all the good girls in his set mentally, finally he settled for Sugar, she was sweet as her name always lending a helping hand in class, he interpreted that to be a weakness ,he knew it will be tedious because Sugar was devout Christian. So he started by sending her a card with sweet words, then a text to profess his love saying he'd been keeping his feelings to himself all along because he felt inferior to her. He put in a lot of effort and at last they met.

'Sugar you've no idea what it means to me that you honored my invitation, I thought I might have freaked you out with messages.'

'Smokey I don't know what you're up to but I'm begging you in your best interest please stay away from me.' She said and stood up to leave.

I know I'm not your type but please drink the coke now, I've already paid for it.' She took a long sip and left, before she could reach the exit she started feeling dizzy, Smokey was there to help her, she felt close to numbness, Smokey led her out together they looked like a cute couple as she rested on him, from a corner his friends hailed him as he headed to the banging venue.

'What did you do to me.' Sugar gasped when she woke up and saw herself naked in bed with Smokey. 'Just had a slice.' He said grinning.

'You shouldn't have, did you use protection, oh my God, you rascal, scum bag, devil. The lord is seeing you.' She ranted in frustration.

'Common gurl all dis jesu tins you dey do, you're not even a virgin, mtcheww, it was even too wide for my liking, please dress up and leave.'

'You forced yourself on me and you've absolutely no idea the price you'll pay for this.'

'What're you going to do eh, report to the police? I will tell them it was consensual and you're trying to frame me, you've got prove nah, nah, nah.' he said and burst into a delirious laughter.

'No I'm HIV positive.'

'What!!!!!! .Smokey yelled getting up, sweat already formed on his fore head and armpit. 'I had told you to stay way from me for your own interest.' She said and left a stunned Smokey.

Smokey was running mad as he searched for the cure of AIDS for one day only, he was devastated, he didn't use protection because he thought she was a virgin and would probably be clean because she went to Church.

He told his friends that his friend Akamu slept with an AIDS patient accidentally and he needed cure, his friend Flavour who was a medical student told him the deed was done cus the virus once introduced will undergo incubation and after 3 months status will be visible. Ora another friend suggested his friend visited a babalawo which he heeded and drank a large concoction that made him suffer flatulence and people stayed away from him. He was still scared and visited a Pastor, he was at it and missed his final paper, he underwent rigorous prayer session and toxic exorcism which he paid a hefty price for, Still he wasn't satisfied and still searched for a scientific cure. His friend Oha in Microbiology Dept told him to get early morning urine from persons of all 8 blood groups.

'But there are only four blood groups now or did they discover more?' He asked.
'No now there is positive and negative to all groups that's what I mean.'

'How will I get it.'

'What's your blood group?

'B+.'

'Ehen am negative, my roommate Okpa is O- now we have 3, I will help your friend but it will cost o, so just prepare.'

'Ok.'

Two days after paying, the urine from all blood groups was delivered to him, as per Oha's instructions he should mix it and drink it t a spot. Using complex toxicity to kill the virus was his explanation which of course was made up, he knew it was Smokey that needed the cure and he also knew about Smokey's conquest so he thought it was only fair to deceive him by giving him urine to drink and extracting money from him, he got the urine randomly from the guys Smokey slept with their girls and labelled it. What he didn't know was that, that will be Smokey's last drink as he went to meet his creator after drinking the urine, he had been taking several other concussions from other sources too.

Smokey completed his quest of bedding 100 girls before graduating but paid with his life for the fear of the virus which he had not even been diagnosed with yet.

Amina Idris

AWA'S PLIGHT

A Fisherman was spreading his net early one morning, the day was yet to break and everything still looked like a shadow, as he paddled his canoe away after spreading his net, he felt completely at home on the river, it was like his sanctuary, the serenity of the water was disturbed when someone fell into it from atop the bridge, the waves rocked the Fisherman's canoe which he steadied in no time, he knew it was a suicide attempt and he could leave the person who obviously couldn't swim to his or her faith but instead he jumped into the water and with great effort he dragged the victim ashore.

Awa was ecstatic about her wedding until she visited her Aunty Murtika in the hospital, she lay frail and sickly,

the once beautiful Aunty Murtika looked worse than a ghost, her skin seemed to be peeling on the bed, Awa remembered her parents warning as though her mom wouldn't come along, stay as far away as you can from her, don't touch her, don't sit down, try not to breath. Awa and her mom kept their distance as they offered their pleasantries and left hurriedly. Awa was lost in thought as she trailed behind her mom, Aunty Murtika was once everyone's favorite but now they all avoided her like a plague. Though no one could actually say what was wrong her there were speculation that she had AIDS, her husband's health started failing after the death of their son, who had also died tragically after suffering from a devastating unnamed illness, soon there were rumors that Aids killed the boy and the husband later and now Aunty Murtika could breath her last any moment.

'Now that we've gotten that visit out of our hands I feel free.' Her mom said when they got home, as if she never befriended Aunty Murtika, Awa was sad.

'Aunty was so beautiful and happy at her wedding, what happened to her all of a sudden.' Awa voiced out her thoughts.

'Hmmm I don't know, don't worry about it, go to mama Jolade's house so she can measure the aso-ke .'

The new song around the house now was her wedding, Awa was happy though, she was luckier than most girls that married earlier at 14 or 15, she was 17 and had schooled up to jss3, she could read and write, she read virtually everything her eyes came upon, after dropping out of school she learnt a trade with a local seamstress. That would make her independent. Inwardly Awa wanted to school further, she had read about women who made history and secretly she sought to make a difference in the world, well those were cherished dreams and dreams do not respect boundaries. She saw a tent and people gathered around it on her way to Mama Jolade's she looked on and saw the posters 'know your status, free screening, know early and live long, practice safe sex, abstinence is best.' The tap on her shoulders interrupted her. A young woman dressed

in jeans and a crested top that read ignorance is a disease was smiling at her. The lady greeted and Awa replied sheepishly and started walking away, wait the lady waved and thrust a pamphlet into her hands.

At night with the help of a kerosene lamp she read the pamphlet, previously when she was not about to wed the contents would not have mattered to her but now it did. She was a well brought up girl whom her parents could boast of but how much did she know about Danfalata her would be husband, what if he had engaged in premarital sex, what if he had an infection, Auntie Murtika was also very healthy when she got married then her son fell ill and died followed by her husband now she was dreaded by even her family members. The next day Awa went to that tent, she spoke to the lady that gave her the pamphlet and had herself tested, she was elated that she was negative, she decided to ask Danfalata to come and get the test done since it was free, she was shocked when Danfalata slapped her and threatened to call off the wedding, stating that her

visiting those people was a prove of her immorality, to be sure that the boys she bedded did not infect her.

To her surprise her parents sided with Danfalata. 'You will not pour sand in my garri.' Her mom yelled.

'We left her in school for too long, why did you go there in the first place, did you see any of our village member there? Her screamed. 'If Danfalata refuses to marry you, you'll have to rub soot on my face.' He added.

'God forbid my husband.' Her mother said spitting on the floor.

Danfalata was placated and the wedding happened. Two years later Awa was blessed with a baby girl, within that time Aunty Murtika passed away. Danfalata and his family were disappointed, an heir would have been better her father in law said.

During Awa's second pregnancy complications arose which led the doctor to run series of test and Awa and her first child who had become almost bed ridden were discovered to be HIV positive, Danfalata refused to

believe and blamed it on Awa, she miscarried after her young daughter passed away and Danfalata was at the verge of divorcing her saying she brought disease to his household. When he fell ill too, every effort made by Awa to send Danfalata to the clinic was in vain, she herself had been and has been placed on ARV.

When Danfalata passed away Awa was only 23 years old and her parents in law sent her packing early one morning calling her the bringer of bad luck, she tried in vain to explain to them that it was Danfalata who had brought the virus first and infected her.

That was how she ended up jumping over Bamaka bridge.

When the girl regained consciousness the Fisherman let her cry, vituperate and lament first before listening to her story of why she would want to take her own life.

'Come what may you're wrong to attempt suicide, had you died you would have ended up in hell and all your suffering in this world would be vain.' He told the girl.

'My life is hell already , what differences would it make.'

She lamented.

The fishermen laughed and rose. 'Follow me.' He said and he led her to his backyard and pointed to a grave.

'There I buried my wife, she was not HIV positive, she was not sick, she was nine months pregnant and a car hit her while she was crossing the road. I couldn't save her even if I wanted to, you I don't know from Adam yet I saved you. If you're alive your mission on earth has not ended, look into the future with hope young lady.'

Eight years later Awa was successfully working with an NGO on sensitization and awareness on the virus, with herself as a living example, with her main point always being know not just your status but your partner's as well, if she had refused to marry Danfalata until he got tested she would have been negative, but still today even with the virus she was able to make a difference in lives that she thanked God for and her human Savior the Fisherman.

Amina Idris

IKEMEFUNA

Is a man
Referred to as a god
Kindly built. catty eyes
White teeth,
Fair like the morning sun

When he walks through
The paths of our hamlet
Bulgy stares resonate
From eyes of Spirits and humans

Dames fight with parents
Just to feel the decibel
Of his words

At the last yam festival
He travelled to a chipper land

Where his appearance

Had no comparison

There Hormones deflied decorum

With belles of feuding behinds

Making his countenance stricken-monkey disease

He is now a god, mortal

PAPA'S ADVICE

I.

Son

Tonight,

I have come

To rain counsels

On your arid thoughts-

Thoughts that lack ideas

And promulgate actions

That defies the creed of the gods

I might be old

With shaky bones

And swollen gums

But my eagle eye remains undeterred

Ii.

Son,
The totem betwixt
your thigh is not meant
To drill holes
On the hymen of beuts
With luscious bosoms

Neither is your strength
Meant for glaring exhibitionism
To spur progesterones
Of mortals with lesser strength

They are meant to impact posterity

III.

Son,
The frequent rising and falling
Of a man's member
Will be his own damnation

Likewise excessive twisting

Of the neck to the allure
Of wrestling behinds
Will make the neck stiff

IV

Son,
Does excess fun
Not make "fun" boring?

Does over-feeding
Not repel satisfaction?

V.

Son,
Your exuberance may be at its altitude
But you must quell the demon of lust
Lest dirges would be thy offering

Ajise Vincent

DARK EDGES

Life is full of choices

Choices we're not allowed to make sometimes

Life is a challenge, sometimes we win other times we
lose.

Give in not to temptation

A times we are lonely,

lost or anxious

A times we joyous, relaxed and feel among.

Life is full of dark edges in many forms

Desperation, lust, greed and complacency

Let's embrace light, love and truth

Let derive knowledge and embrace change

Let's repel ignorance so we may not live on the dark
edges.

